

***Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs***

Approved by the VSBPE February 15, 2005

Mentoring is an essential component of the preparation and induction of new educators, and of the continuum of professional preparation, development, and leadership. Research shows that when done well, mentoring improves new teacher and thereby student performance, reduces educator turnover, and improves school climate.

These guidelines are intended to assist supervisory unions, school districts, and other entities in the design of effective mentoring programs for new educators. The components are organized in order of priority when initiating a mentoring program.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring is a structured program that pairs a mentor with an educator who is either new to the profession or new to the school, in order to provide training, orientation, assistance and support.

Mentors are experienced educators who have demonstrated high quality instructional practice and who are trained in mentoring to provide consistent individual guidance and support.

**Components of Successful Mentoring Programs**

Effective mentoring programs for new educators include the following five components:

***1. A Structured Process That Is Focused On A Model of Practice Designed to Improve Student Learning***

*A Research-Based Model or Definition of Effective Practice:* Effective mentoring programs are based upon a specific model or definition of effective educational practice that informs the objectives and substance of both the mentoring program and the supervision and evaluation system within the school and district. The model or definition is thoroughly understood by the mentors and drives the content and structure of mentoring activities.

*Program and Individual Goals:* Mentoring programs include both program and individual goals. Program goals specify the desired outcomes of the mentoring program at the school and/or district level and identify the means of evaluating the effectiveness of the program in relation to those goals. Program goals must be communicated to all members of the school community. Individual goals are developed by the new teacher in collaboration with their mentors, within the framework of the model or definition of effective practice, the *5 Standards for Vermont Educators*, and the school or district's Action Plan.

**2. *Defined Criteria and Procedures for Selection of Mentors and Placement of New Educators***

There must be clear criteria and procedures for selecting mentors and for matching mentors and new educators. Important considerations include physical proximity and congruity of content and/or instructional level. In addition, there must be a process for on-going assessment of the relationship and of the mentor's skills.

**3. *Initial and On-Going, Research-Based Training for Mentors***

There must be initial and on-going, research-based training for mentors in essential skill areas. These include adult learning theory, evidence-based observational skills, action research, and coaching skills.

**4. *Complete Separation of the Mentoring and Performance Evaluation Processes***

The mentoring process must be clearly separated from the performance evaluation process. The mentor must not be involved in any way in evaluating the new educator for employment purposes.

**5. *Adequate Time for the Mentoring Relationship to be Successful***

*Duration:* The mentoring relationship for a Level I educator should last a minimum of two years, with the most intense contact occurring during the first year. The intensity and content of the partnership will vary somewhat depending on whether the mentee is new to education (defined as having three or fewer years of experience) or is an experienced educator teaching in a new endorsement area.

*Intensity:* There must be consistent, dedicated time for each mentor/mentee pair to meet (not to take the place of individual or team planning time). At least weekly meeting time is recommended in the first year of the mentorship for the mentor and new teacher to jointly plan instruction and problem-solve difficult issues that have arisen in the classroom. In addition, at least monthly release time (a minimum of 3 hours/month) is recommended for mentor and new teacher to conduct structured observations of each other's practice.

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To ensure successful implementation of these guidelines, it is recommended that mentoring programs provide a means for recognition and/or compensation for the mentor's training and work (e.g., stipends, relicensure or academic credit, public acknowledgement)

For further information on mentoring programs, please consult *The Vermont Field Guide to Educator Mentoring* (Spring 2003, The Teacher Quality Enhancement Program).

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COMPONENT	EXPLORATION	TRANSITION	FULL IMPLEMENTATION
Structured Process for Developing a Mentoring Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate research-based models for mentoring  <input type="checkbox"/> Consider definition of effective teaching practices  <input type="checkbox"/> Identify possible desired outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt model for mentoring based on information gathered in investigation  <input type="checkbox"/> Create or adopt working definition of effective teaching practices  <input type="checkbox"/> Develop program goals that specify desired outcomes at district level	<input type="checkbox"/> Model for mentoring is thoroughly understood by mentors and all other members of school community  <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring model aligns with supervision/evaluation systems  <input type="checkbox"/> Definition is thoroughly understood by mentors  <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring aligns with supervision/evaluation systems and effective teaching practices  <input type="checkbox"/> Create mentoring activities based on model/definition  <input type="checkbox"/> Identify means of evaluating effectiveness of program in relation to program goals <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate program goals to all members of school community <input type="checkbox"/> Develop mentee goals with mentor within model/definition

*Page references refer to The Vermont Field Guide to Educator Mentoring – First Edition*

## Guidelines for Developing Successful Educator Mentoring Programs (Cont.)

COMPONENT	EXPLORATION	TRANSITION	FULL IMPLEMENTATION
Defined Criteria and Selection Process for Mentors and Their Assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify possible criteria for selection of mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish criteria for selection of mentors <input type="checkbox"/> Develop procedures for selection of mentors and their assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish and implement procedures for matching mentors with mentees <input type="checkbox"/> Establish process for evaluating on-going relationship between mentor and mentee
Research Based Training and Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify effective practices for mentor training <input type="checkbox"/> Identify resources needed to support initial and on-going training of mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose or develop appropriate training for your district <input type="checkbox"/> Provide initial training for mentors in essential skill areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide on-going training for existing mentors <input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities for collegial support among mentors <input type="checkbox"/> Provide initial training for additional mentors to expand district pool
Separation of Mentoring and Evaluation		<input type="checkbox"/> Differentiate between mentoring program and performance evaluation system	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate clear and deliberate separation of mentoring program and performance evaluation system
Intensity of Mentoring Relationship	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine resources needed to provide appropriate mentoring support <input type="checkbox"/> Consider differentiated levels of intensity according to individual needs <input type="checkbox"/> Develop strategies for providing time for mentor/mentee observations and consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish appropriate mentoring program <input type="checkbox"/> Establish procedure for determining appropriate level of intensity of individual mentoring program <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot strategies for providing time for mentor/mentee observations and consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide for consistent mentor/mentee relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Provide level of intensity of mentoring appropriate to mentee's identified needs <input type="checkbox"/> Provide released time for structured observations <input type="checkbox"/> Provide consistent, dedicated time for mentor/mentee consultation